



North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation

[www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov) for State Parks Info and Events

## INSIDE...

HEROISM AWARDS	P. 3
CHIMNEY ROCK FETE	P. 4
SUPERINTENDENTS MEET	P. 8
TRUST FUND ACTION	P. 9
MST TRAIL DEDICATION	P. 10

Michael F. Easley  
Governor

December 2007

Volume 21 Number 6

William G. Ross Jr.  
Secretary, DENR

# CONSERVATION PARTNERS HONORED

Several key players in the acquisition of Chimney Rock for a new state park in Hickory Nut Gorge were honored during a celebration there in late September.

Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, presented awards from the National Association of State Park Directors to Sen. Walter Dalton and Mike Leonard and Dick Ludington of The Conservation Fund.

The association offers the awards to individuals who have made an extraordinary contribution at the state, regional or national level to furthering the goal of a national system of state parks.

"These three individuals have each made extraordinary contributions as part of the Chimney Rock preservation effort," Ledford said. "They each stepped up to the plate on behalf of all North Carolinians and our guests so that this and future generations will be able to enjoy one of our national, natural treasures."

In another presentation, Susie Hamrick Jones, executive director of the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, honored Jim Proctor,



LEWIS LEDFORD, LEFT, PRESENTS AN AWARD TO SEN. WALTER DALTON, ONE OF THREE PERSONS HONORED BY THE NASPD FOR CONSERVATION EFFORTS.

mayor of Lake Lure, Barbara Meliski, mayor of Chimney Rock Village, and Jerry Stensland, a planner with Rutherford County government, with awards for their hard work in the development of Chimney Rock State Park.

Sen. Dalton was the chief sponsor of legislation authorizing a state park at Hickory Nut Gorge in 2005 and secured a \$15 million appropriation in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

# PARKS GAIN FROM '07 TRUST FUNDS

More than 3,500 acres of land will likely be brought under conservation by the state parks system as a result of grants this fall from the Natural Heritage and Clean Water Management trust funds.

The parks system received \$5.6 million in grants from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund in November and \$5.46 million from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund in September and November.

Coupled with \$9.89 million in allocations

from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the grants will support land acquisitions at 10 state park units including Chimney Rock State Park in Rutherford County and the newly authorized Deep River State Trail centered in Chatham County.

"Each year, trustees for these conservation trust funds have become more adept at combining their efforts for effective conservation of our natural resources and support of the state's One North Carolina Naturally initiative,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Department of Environment and Natural Resources

# UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

**Edward McNorton** has joined the division as a radio engineer. He has 22 years of related experience, including that as an electronic technician

for the U.S. Navy and as a contractor in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Mary Myers** has been promoted to senior office assistant at Haw River State Park. A

graduate of Appalachian State University, she has worked at the park for two years and brings more than seven years of related experience to the job.

**Matthew Mutel** is a new ranger at Mount Mitchell State Park. He holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Oberlin College in Ohio and recently worked as a backcountry ranger at Grandfather Mountain. He has been an environmental educator in Iowa and Utah.

**Heidi Dull** has joined the division as assistant director of environmental education programming at The Summit at Haw River State Park. She is a graduate of UNC-Wilmington and Appalachian State University with bachelor's degrees in environmental science and communications. She has more than four years experience as a zookeeper and environmental educator at the N.C. Zoological Park.

**Charles Perkins** joined the staff of Medoc Mountain State Park as a maintenance mechanic. He has 14 years of related experience as a contractor and is a graduate of Northern Nash High School. He has worked two years as a seasonal employee at the park.

**Michael Cockburn** is a new maintenance mechanic at William B. Umstead State Park. He has more than 30 years related experience and has worked for Ryder Transportation Systems, Orange County Public Works and was a general utility worker at Eno River State Park.

**Victoria Leary** has joined the staff of Haw River State Park as an office assistant.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## From The Director's Desk

Bringing high-quality land and waters into conservation takes commitment, of course, but it also requires some serious coordination of all the partners involved. There are numerous examples reported in *The Steward* this month that reflect a remarkable level of coordination.

The principal funding sources are the Parks and Recreation, Clean Water Management and Natural Heritage trust funds, controlled by three independent boards, while so much of the legwork is done by a raft of conservation agencies both regional and national. Their land specialists often identify critical properties, negotiate with owners and synchronize their work with that of land protection specialists within the state parks system. For our part, we also have to do some careful planning to set broad conservation goals and make sure the parks system grows in a purposeful way.

Then, acquisitions can hinge on the whims of landowners who rightly have their own timetables and agendas.

Successes lately include properties added to Chimney Rock State Park that begin to tie together larger tracts, a 1,082-acre property enlarging Pettigrew State Park, the largest tract added to Lake Norman State Park since its creation and a portion of Jones Island to be managed by Hammocks Beach State Park.

My gratitude and admiration go to all the parties who help make these successes happen while dealing with constantly shifting schedules and priorities.

Our re-designed Web site ([ncparks.gov](http://ncparks.gov)) has been getting good reviews. It's important to remember that a Web site is an organic thing, constantly growing and evolving. Our public information office and Tom Howard already have a long list of improvements in the works, and we'll be exploring new ideas and innovations. If you see something that needs to be addressed, please let us know.

Lastly, I want extend best holiday wishes to all in the division and all our friends. Enjoy time with family and others close to you. And, thanks for a wonderful year.

Sincerely,



Lewis Ledford

*MATTHEW HAYNES, LEFT, AND  
ERIC NYGARD WERE PRESENTED  
WITH THE AWARDS AT A DEPART-  
MENTAL MANAGER'S FORUM.*

## **HANGING ROCK DUO GIVEN HEROISM AWARDS**

Erik Nygard, superintendent, and Matthew Haynes, ranger, at Hanging Rock State Park were presented with heroism awards from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Secretary Bill Ross honored the men at a departmental manager's forum Oct. 31 at The Summit at Haw River State Park.

On July 16, 2006, Nygard and Haynes responded to reports of a park visitor in distress in a parking area. They discovered a 15-year-old boy who was having trouble breathing and, for a time, had stopped breathing altogether. They administered CPR until emergen-



cy officials arrived and the young man made full recovery.

The teen was visiting the park as part of a day camp for troubled youths organized by Stokes County Volunteer Services.

The commendations read, in part, "The immediate and professional actions taken by Erik and Matt were primarily responsible for the survival of this young boy. Their dedication to public service, the execution of their responsibilities and the compassion shown by their actions deserves our recognition, respect and appreciation."

## **‘PERSONNEL’**

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2*

A graduate of Central Virginia Community College, she has more than 20 years of related experience and last worked for Presbyterian Homes and Family Services in Lynchburg, Va.

**James Sprouse** has joined the division as a fire management specialist. He has a bachelor's degree in biology from UNC-Greensboro and has worked for the Triangle Land Conservancy as

a land manager and was a land steward for The Nature Conservancy in Arizona and Louisiana.

**Daniel Baumgardner** has been promoted to senior maintenance mechanic at New River State Park. With eight years related experience, he previously worked at Mount Mitchell State Park and has attended Lenoir-Rhyne College and Caldwell Community College.

## **‘PARK’ IT WITH A STATE PARKS SPECIALTY LICENSE TAG**



*The Division of Parks and Recreation is accepting applications and payment for the first 300 license plates. There is a \$30 fee in addition to regular license fees (\$60 for personalized plates). Additional fees support conservation through the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds.*

**Applications online at [www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov)  
or write: Adrienne McCoig, N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation  
1615 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1615**



# A CELEBRATION AT CHIMNEY ROCK

It was a time to simply celebrate, trade handshakes and, while gathered under the looming granite cliffs, a time to let the reality to sink in: There really is a Chimney Rock State Park.

People attending a special celebration at the park in late September represented 16 organizations including outdoor clubs, land conservancies, small towns in the Hickory Nut Gorge and the N.C. General Assembly itself. Each played a direct role in the state's acquisition of the tract with its signature 315-foot spire.

"It is truly a great thing we did together," Sen. Walter Dalton told the crowd of about 100. "We need to do more of it. We need to continue to add to the parks. It's what makes us great."

In May, the deal was closed to add the 996-acre Chimney Rock Park, a private attraction since 1902, as the centerpiece of a new state park being created in the gorge. During this year's legislative session, the park was officially named Chimney Rock State Park.

The \$24 million deal was first announced at Chimney Rock by Gov. Mike Easley on a bitterly cold January day. That announcement was attended by a relative few who were directly involved. And, the official closing in May was also a quiet affair.

Many felt that a wider celebration was in order for the hundreds of people involved in the park's development and for the local community.

"This has been a conservation success story involving many partners, all with the commitment to preserve what



*MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE EVENT IN THE PARK PAVILION.*

is best about this goodliest land," Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, told the crowd.

The acquisition of Chimney Rock was not the beginning of the creation of the state park, nor is it the end of that process, Ledford said, but it's a "glittering centerpiece of conservation efforts in the Hickory Nut Gorge."

The state park has grown to about 3,500 acres including Chimney Rock, the adjacent World's Edge property and tracts on the opposite side of the narrow gorge in the vicinity of Rumbling Bald Mountain.

At its annual meeting the evening before the celebration, the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy announced the acquisition of 289 acres in three tracts adjacent to Chimney Rock that will eventually be added to the park. This acreage will better connect the park's two largest tracts and protect the headwaters of the stream that creates Hickory Nut Falls.

Along with that organization, The Nature Conservancy, the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina and The

Conservation Fund continue to be actively engaged in seeking suitable land for the new state park.

The state purchased Chimney Rock from the Morse family. Todd Morse, president of the family company and a descendent of the park's founder, Lucius B. Morse, said the success of the state park is partly a backlash to intense development in the gorge. The Morse family and many of their neighbors struggled to find a way to keep from seeing the landmark lost to vacation housing, he said.

"A lot of private land-owners in western North Carolina are in the same situation," Morse said. "The only difference is we have a great big rock that a lot of people like to come and see."

The state acquisition allowed the owners to accomplish their goals, he said, which included protecting the natural resource, keeping it available to the public and protecting the company's employees.

The transfer of the property is accompanied by an

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 6*

# WWW.NCPARKS.GOV NOW ONLINE

The Division of Parks and Recreation has unveiled a redesigned and expanded Web site and established a new Web address: [www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov).

The new site has all the information about the state parks system and related programs of the division as the old site as well as new features that should appeal to visitors and parks system partners and stakeholders.

"In this era of internet communications, an organization's Web site is a critical tool for connecting with the public and for reflecting the organization's purpose and mission," said Lewis Ledford, division director. "This redesigned site broadens the state parks system's presence on the internet and is a solid foundation for more improvements in years to come."

The division's site was last redesigned in 2002.

The new site was developed by Ed King, who retired in 2005 from the Information Technology program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Tom Howard, a retired interpretation and education specialist with the division who was largely responsible for developing and maintaining the site since it was first launched in 1995.

Howard has been creating ways to integrate the site with several of the division's existing databases, and that has resulted in more sophisticated Web-based tools.

For instance, there are portals to the division's popular Natural Resource Inventory Database, which keeps track of important species and habitats in the parks. And, this type of database management allows for staff directories and similar lists to remain current.

Soon, individual parks will be able to make "real time" changes to select areas of the Web site for such information as trail closures and changes in operating hours.

New portions of the site are meant to offer a broader picture of all the division's work, giving higher profile to such programs as trails, natural resource management, federal and state grants, long-range planning and the design and development of new parks and park facilities.

There is new information about jobs in the state parks and in the administrative branches of the division. And, there are "Frequently Asked Question" sections aimed at both park visitors and the media.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 6*

## CONSERVANCIES ANNOUNCE LAND DEALS

Two land conservancies, working independently, have announced key land acquisitions for Chimney Rock State Park.

The Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy acquired three tracts totaling 289 acres on Rich and Stony mountains that will improve a corridor linking the Chimney Rock area with the World's Edge tract. Both of those larger tracts were acquired by the state parks system earlier this year.

The \$3.8 million conservancy acquisitions will also protect the headwaters of several high quality streams, including Falls Creek, which flows across Hickory Nut Falls within the park.

The Nature Conservancy also announced the acquisition of 45 acres adjacent to World's Edge and 46 acres on Rumbling Bald Mountain, on the opposite side of Hickory Nut Gorge.

"Our land acquisition strategy at Chimney Rock would not be successful without the dedicated and resourceful work of our partners," said Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system. "These latest acquisitions allow us to further protect the natural resources of Hickory Nut Gorge

and mold the state park there into a cohesive unit."

The newest acquisitions will likely be added to the state park using funds from the Parks and Recreation, Clean Water Management and Natural Heritage trust funds.

Kieran Roe, executive director of Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, said, "With these acquisitions, we have expanded the scope of Chimney Rock State Park, which will be among the gems of the North Carolina state parks system."

The Nature Conservancy bought the tract on Rumbling Bald Mountain from John Haywood Moore for \$1.3 million and the property next to World's Edge for \$777,750.

"I think this acquisition illustrates what is occurring in Hickory Nut Gorge, said Mike Horak, associate director at the conservancy. "Conservation groups are now acquiring smaller tracts and linking together larger tracts. The ultimate outcome will be one of the most significant state parks in North Carolina at our collective back door."

# TRUST FUNDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

said Lewis Ledford, director of the Division of Parks and Recreation. "The critical properties to be acquired by these grants will help develop new parks and greatly enhance established parks."

Each of the three trust funds was established with its own mission. The Natural Heritage Trust Fund is dedicated to the preservation of important species and habitats while the Clean Water Management Trust Fund is concerned with protecting water quality and conservation of riparian areas. A portion of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is set aside for state parks land acquisition.

More and more often, grants from two or three of the funds are combined for important land projects.

The combined effort for state parks in this round of grants is directed at 24 tracts, the largest being a 1,082-acre property on the Scuppernong River at a newly designated section of Pettigrew State Park in Washington and Tyrell counties.

About 2,500 acres along the river was added to the park two years ago with the help of The Nature Conservancy.

It is likely eight properties totaling 513 acres will be added to Chimney Rock State Park, authorized in 2005 and firmly established earlier this year with the state's acquisition of Chimney Rock Park, formerly a privately owned nature attraction.

The properties lie on both the north and south sides of Hickory Nut Gorge and include several nationally and regionally significant natural heritage sites as well as the headwaters of Falls Creek, which creates Hickory Nut Falls within the park. Some smaller tracts are important for access options to the park and for rock climbing access.

About 300 acres could be acquired to expand the Deep River State Trail authorized this year by the N.C. General Assembly. The property is near the White Pines preserve managed by the Triangle Land Conservancy and within a significant natural heritage area. The division currently manages about 1,000 acres in the river corridor.

The trail will eventually be a network of state- and locally-owned conservation lands and recreation amenities stretching along the river corridor through five counties.

Other planned land acquisitions financed by the funds will benefit Elk Knob, South Moun-



*A STATE TRAIL ON THE DEEP RIVER IS AMONG THE PARK PROJECTS THAT WILL BENEFIT FROM THE GRANTS.* tains, Lake Norman, Eno River, Stone Mountain, Lake Waccamaw and Merchants Millpond state parks.

Negotiations are still under way for some of the proposed land acquisitions. The majority, however, have either been placed under contract by the State Property Office or are in the control of nonprofit land conservancies and land trusts.

## WEB SITE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Attention was given to presenting more complete and clear information about park regulations and fees.

The individual state park sites also include a "Sights and Sounds" feature where parks can post photos, video and audio segments and detailed information about park-specific features and programs.

## CHIMNEY ROCK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

agreement under which Chimney Rock Management LLC will continue to operate the park at least through 2009 in a manner similar to its current operation, including charging an admission fee.

Under the agreement, Todd Morse will leave the company in December. Morse said that will be a difficult transition for him, "but as a citizen of North Carolina, I'll always own a piece of the rock."



# AWARDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

2006 to direct towards the Chimney Rock purchase. He also spearheaded the effort to allow Certificates of Deposit, backed by revenues of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, to be used for state park land acquisition, which allowed for the 3,000-acre expansion of Lake James State Park.

"Sen. Dalton has been a consistent supporter and friend of the North Carolina state parks system in the General Assembly," Ledford said. "He continually looks for ways to support our mission of conservation, environmental education and quality outdoor recreation."

Leonard and Ludington were both directly involved in negotiations with the Morse family for the Chimney Rock purchase and with securing a \$2.35 million private donation that ultimately made the purchase possible.

Leonard is a Winston-Salem attorney, a trustee of the N.C. Natural Heritage Trust Fund and a national board member of The Conservation Fund.

"Mike Leonard is a tireless advocate for and friend of the North Carolina state parks system," Ledford said. "He has provided important support for this new park and several others across the state as well as other important conservation measures."

Ludington, southeast regional director and senior associate of The Conservation Fund, has been the lead person responsible for eight crucial land acquisition projects, which added 2,874 acres to the state parks system representing a \$29.3 million investment in conservation.

"Dick Ludington has provided crucial support for significant expansions of our state parks," Ledford said. "He constantly seeks ways that his organization and the Division of Parks and Recreation can work in tandem on conservation initiatives."

# TRUST FUND

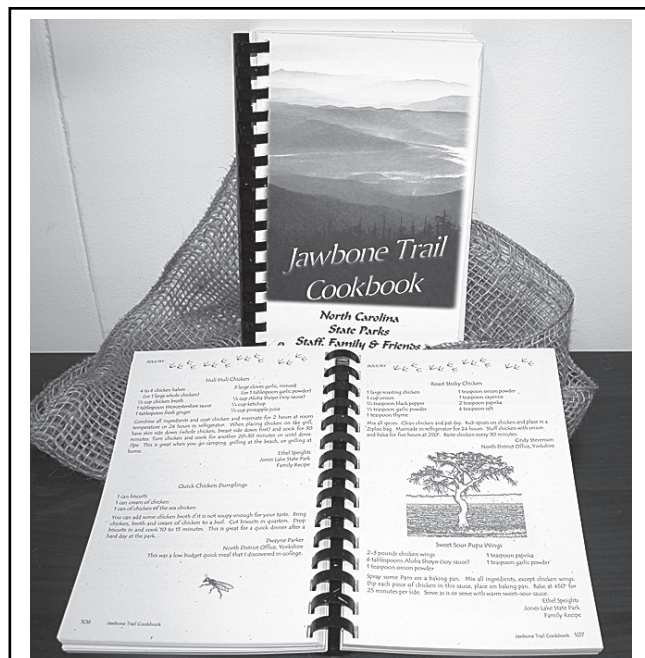
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

system or in the appraisal stage.

They include 459 acres at South Mountains State Park that could improve opportunities for camping facilities as well as properties at Eno River, Mayo River, Medoc Mountain, New River and Raven Rock state parks and Mount Jefferson State Natural Area.

Some of these acquisitions are likely to be augmented by grants from the Natural Heritage and Clean Water Management trust funds.

The approved capital projects are planned



## THE 'JAWBONE TRAIL COOKBOOK'

A 'NATURALLY WONDERFUL' COLLECTION OF TREASURED HERITAGE RECIPES FROM N.C. STATE PARKS STAFF, FAMILY & FRIENDS

ENJOY UNIQUE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS AND PEN-AND-INK DRAWINGS FROM STATE PARKS STAFF AND FRIENDS; 200 SPIRAL-BOUND PAGES; 13 RECIPE CATEGORIES THAT INCLUDE 296 DELIGHTFUL DISHES

**\$10 EACH PLUS \$3.50 SHIPPING & HANDLING**  
**CONTACT: NC STATE PARKS, JAWBONE TRAIL COOKBOOK, 1615 MSC, RALEIGH, NC 27699-1615, (919-715-4141)**  
 ALSO AVAILABLE AT STATE PARKS

for 11 state park units and include \$3.58 million for a new visitor center at Raven Rock State Park and \$3.3 million for a visitor center and eastern district office at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park. Funds for the design of both projects were set aside earlier.

The project list also includes a significant renovation of the marina and boat ramp facilities at Carolina Beach State Park, campground improvements at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area and a new boathouse and shoreline improvements at Morrow Mountain State Park.

# ***PARKS TOLD THEIR COMMITMENT NOTICED***

An underlying theme at the 57<sup>th</sup> annual state parks superintendent's conference in November was that the parks system is getting high marks from the public and lawmakers in the state for its energy and commitment to mission.

That assessment came with some practical ideas on how parks can help burnish that broad public support.

"It's not often the people will thank you for the job you do for North Carolina," Bill Laxton, deputy secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, told the superintendents. "It's your love and commitment to the job that get you through. I just wanted to say 'Thank you.'"

Laxton said that the state parks have a strong story to tell and will figure prominently in the department's efforts at launching a strategic conservation plan in coming months.

That plan to buttress the state's infrastructure of open space and conservation lands is largely dependent on the health of four conservation trust funds, including the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, which provides for all state park land acquisition and capital projects.

Lewis Ledford, division director, told the superintendents that in fiscal 2006-07, land acquisitions through that fund and grants from the Natural Heritage and Clean Water Management Trust Funds added 7,526 acres to the system worth about \$46 million.

Although an expanding system with four new state parks and several new state natural areas accounted for some of the activity, the year's 35 land transactions were spread among 16 state park units.

Public support is strong for that growth, Ledford said. "One of the reasons we've been successful is we have objective systems in place for projects. We've got the Project Evaluation Program (PEP) and the Land Evaluation and Acquisition Program (LEAP)."

PEP and LEAP score and prioritize capital and land acquisition projects respectively.

Ledford reminded the superintendents that the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund also supports dozens of local parks and recreation projects each year through its matching grant program.

Superintendents and rangers should be familiar with how the trust fund has helped their local communities – either within the state park or through grants – and get that message to park



*DEPUTY SECRETARY BILL LAXTON ADDRESSES THE PARK SUPERINTENDENTS DURING THE CONFERENCE.*

visitors and their community contacts, he said.

The parks should also nurture relationships with partners in the local communities such as land trusts and conservation advocacy groups, he said.

Jonathan Howes, chairman of the trust fund, said, "Members of the General Assembly and especially the leadership, appreciate what the funds can do, how special they are and what they can contribute to conservation in North Carolina."

Superintendents can help the cause by keeping community leaders and local legislative delegations informed about their state parks and new projects, Howes said.

The success of the trust funds also depends on the quality of trustees that control the funds, and park superintendents are sometimes in a position to identify good people to serve on those boards, he said.

Don Reuter, deputy director of the division, briefed the group on several developing initiatives of the division.

Plans for an internet-based and call-center reservations system are progressing and the division hopes to request bids very soon.

He introduced Sandy Franzen who is in a new position devoted to contract management and park enterprise programs, including point-of-sale opportunities in visitor centers.

And, Reuter reminded the group that a new governor's administration will be in place in less than 18 months and that the parks system should be considering ways to "tell our story" effectively.

The division continues to develop its mentoring and training programs for administrative and field staff to develop skills and ease transition in light of retirements and restructuring.



# TRUST FUND TO ISSUE COPs FOR LAND

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority approved issuing \$10 million in Certificates of Participation (COPs) at its October meeting for land acquisition at Elk Knob, Haw River and Mount Mitchell state parks and the newly authorized Deep River State Trail.

Earlier this year, the N.C. General Assembly approved a plan to allow up to \$100 million in COPs with up to \$50 million each to be issued by the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds. Similar to bonds, the certificates will be repaid over 20 years by future revenues of the trust funds.

Meeting at The Summit environmental education center at Haw River State Park, the authority also approved allocations from the trust fund of \$7.15 million for land acquisition at seven state parks and state natural areas and \$18 million for capital projects throughout the system.

Sixty-five percent of the trust fund is reserved for state park land acquisition and capital improvements. The remainder is used for grants for park projects by local governments and for a coastal beach access program.

The state parks system previously used COPs to finance land purchases at Lake James, Haw River and Mayo River state parks and to begin development of facilities on 3,000 acres acquired at Lake James.

Part of the \$10 million in new certificates will target about 300 acres in various tracts at Haw River, the largest being just northeast of The Summit. Other tracts are along the river corridor in both Guilford and Rockingham counties.

The parks system also hopes to use the certificates to acquire 180 acres at Elk Knob. A portion of that land could help eventually link park areas on the knob in Watauga County with those on The Peak in Ashe County. And at Mount Mitchell, 65 acres in two tracts near the park's southwestern boundary could be acquired.

The Deep River State Trail was authorized by the General Assembly this year, and the parks system has acquired land on the river in Chatham County with the help of the Triangle Land Conservancy and other trust funds. Up to \$500,000 in COPs will be issued for other tracts near that site.

As envisioned, the river corridor trail would be a mixture of state- and locally-owned conservation lands and recreation facilities stretching through five counties in the state's heartland.

Lewis Ledford, director of the Division of



*TORRY NERGART, A RANGER AT HAW RIVER STATE PARK, GIVES AUTHORITY MEMBERS A PARK TOUR.*

Parks and Recreation, briefed authority members on that and other recent legislation affecting the state parks system.

One of the most significant was the expansion of the trust fund authority from 11 to 15 members. The authority was originally structured in 1995 with nine members.

Three authority members have yet to be appointed, but four new members were sworn in at the meeting to fill new and vacated seats. They are Phil McKnelly, a former division director, Thomas Blue, Robert Epting and Edward Wood.

In his briefing, Ledford took time to educate new appointees about ongoing projects throughout the system and to present an overview of the effect that the trust fund has had on the parks system since it was established in 1974 and on its programs such as environmental education, sustainable building practices and the Mountains-To-Sea Trail.

He commented that support by the legislature and by the park system's constituents is probably at its highest level. "And, that probably has a lot to do with development pressure throughout the state," he said.

Jonathan Howes, authority chairman, said, "So many things have been happening that not only let us grow literally in state parks, but in stature all over the place."

Traditionally, the authority has made annual allocations for land acquisition and capital projects in October, based on projected revenues to the trust fund.

The \$7.15 million set aside for land acquisition could purchase up to 1,206 acres in multiple tracts that are either under option by the parks

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 7*

# COUNCIL HOLDS TRAINING SESSIONS

By Kelly Chandler  
Administrative Staff

The Administrative Professional Council organized a division-wide training session for DPR administrative staff Sept. 19-20 at Haw River State Park with more than 50 attendees.

Director Lewis Ledford offered opening remarks and Chief of Operations Susan Tillotson kicked off the second day of training. The agenda included instruction from Teresa McCall, Angie Coleman, and Carrie Paige on human resources procedures such as worker's compensation, holiday shift and premium pay and seasonal payroll.

Accounting specialist Tony Bass instructed the staff on new functions of the budget database and new procedures for submitting weekly purchase card logs. Division budget officers Tammy Dodd and Eva Ennis provided instruction on important budget procedures and policies. The budget and accounting instructors also offered after-hours instruction for more individualized tutelage.

Many of the administrative staff had not yet had the opportunity to meet our new concessions manager, Sandy Franzen. As guest speaker, she outlined changes the parks can expect concerning concessions and spoke on the possibility of a concessions database.

A special dinner was held Sept. 21 and Ledford presented several peer-review awards to those who have made special contributions. Pilot Mountain State Park Assistant Robin Lynch Bennett was honored for her contribution of



*KAREN WILSON OF ENO RIVER STATE PARK GETS SOME ADVANCED INSTRUCTION FROM TONY BASS.*

an article about the history and beauty of Pilot Mountain published in *Yadkin Valley Living* magazine.

Betty Anderson, assistant at William B. Umstead State Park, was honored for obtaining environmental education certification on her own time and at her own expense, while continuing to volunteer beyond her 40-hour workweek. Pam Dillard, assistant at Carolina Beach State Park, was honored for her considerable contributions to the division's administrative staff and the council as last year's chair.

The job of an administrative professional working in state parks today is a dynamic one, and frequent updates are necessary as changes occur in policies, procedures and expectations. The Administrative Professional Training Session fulfills a valuable service to the staff by providing a forum for these updates.

## JONES ISLAND TRACT ADDED TO PARK

A 17-acre tract on Jones Island in the White Oak River is being added to the state parks system as a state natural area under the management of Hammocks Beach State Park.

The conservation of the major portion of the 23-acre island is the result of a partnership between the N.C. Coastal Federation, the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Audubon North Carolina and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

The island lies in the mouth of the river and is considered a regionally significant Natural Heritage Area but was zoned for residential development. The acquisition will ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources and protect water quality in the sensitive estuary area.

A \$550,000 grant from the trust fund helped the Coastal Federation purchase 6.6 acres of the island. Audubon North Carolina donated a 10.34-acre tract. One tract remains in private ownership.

The island is located about seven miles northeast of the park in Onslow County. The park also manages nearby Huggins Island as a state natural area.

"The White Oak River is one of the best kept secrets in Eastern North Carolina," said Richard Rogers, executive director of the trust fund. "The trust fund is proud to be so involved in making sure the water quality of this unique resource is improved, preserved and protected."

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 11*

# 15.1-MILE TRAIL SEGMENT DEDICATED

Partners in the development of the 1,000-mile Mountains-to-Sea Trail dedicated a 15.1-mile segment along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Ashe and Alleghany counties in October.

The trail segment stretches along the corridor of the parkway between N.C. 16 and U.S. 18. The trail's construction was a joint effort of the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, the Ashe County Task Force, the National Park Service and the State Trails Program of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

About 50 people attended the dedication ceremony at the Sheets Gap Overlook at Parkway Milepost 252, about five miles south of the parkway's intersection with N.C. 18. They were invited to bring picnic lunches and to hike a short segment of the trail.

Susan Tillotson, chief of operations for the state parks system, told the group that the trail segment fits in well with a network of state park units in the northern mountains including Elk Knob, New River and Stone Mountain state parks.

She added that the state parks system is leading task forces in other areas of the state that include volunteer and nonprofit organizations such as the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and local governments.

Their task is to better define a corridor, especially through the piedmont, and to develop a statewide network of trails systems using the Mountains-to-Sea Trail as its backbone.

Martha Bogle, deputy superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, said, "Without the tireless dedication of the volunteer community and

support of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, this fine hiking opportunity would not be available. The National Park Service looks forward to the continued opportunity to partner in providing this recreational trail to the residents and visitors in North Carolina."

The original vision of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail was to connect the Great Smoky Mountains National Park at Clingman's Dome to the Atlantic coast at Jockey's Ridge State Park.

Although the route has been mapped for years and a handful of hikers have made the entire journey, roughly half the route now follows secondary roads and highways.

The trail is a footpath more often in the mountains where state and federal conservation lands are connected. Partners in the effort are working to develop more of the trail as footpaths and paddling routes.

"Our division and its partners are committed to the completion of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in the west to Jockey's Ridge State Park on the coast," said Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system. "And the vision is being realized through successes such as the completion of this important trail segment."

Construction of this Blue Ridge Parkway segment received a boost when the American Hiking Society organized crews to help through its Volunteer Vacation Program. Volunteers from as far away as Wisconsin and Florida arrived for a concentrated session in September 2006.

## JONES ISLAND

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10*

Within sight of the town of Swansboro, Jones Island is characterized by low upland rises at the southeast and northwest ends and marshes and small ponds along its eastern shore. The northwest third of the island supports a relatively rare coastal fringe evergreen forest. Loblolly pines and live oaks are prominent and eastern painted buntings have been seen nesting on the island.

The island is culturally significant as well. Judging from artifacts including pottery shards, tools and spear points, Native Americans used Jones Island at least as a temporary hunting and fishing ground. It was also used as a fishing camp and livestock grazing area in Colonial times.

Currently, the island is a popular kayak and canoeing destination.

While water quality in much of the river remains good, it is on the state's list of impaired waterways.

Though managed by the park as a state natural area, Jones Island will not offer public access or facilities.

"We're pleased to add the Jones Island land to the park and to protect water quality on the White Oak," said Paul Donnelly, park superintendent. "Preserving a portion of the island as natural area will hopefully prevent development and head off a potential new source of pollution."



# BURNS CAPS 30-YEAR PARKS CAREER

There was hardly a doubt that Jud Burns would retire with distinction as a state park ranger, just as there was no doubt among those close to him three decades ago that he would somehow become a state park ranger.

At one point, he took a cot in a Mount Mitchell State Park garage, accompanied by power tools, field mice and a wood heater so he could keep working as a seasonal employee at that park and keep applying for the very few job openings that appeared.

Burns' patience and persistence during lean years were remarkable, said Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, who began his own career as a seasonal at the park.

"I don't think I ever knew anyone as committed to a job he wanted to have or put forward more effort to get that job as ranger at a North Carolina State Park," Ledford said.

Phil McKnelly, former director, called it "a sort of tunnel vision based on commitment, passion and a sense of stewardship."

Ledford and McKnelly joined dozens of Burns' colleagues, friends and family at The Summit Conference Center in September to celebrate his retirement after 30 years of service to the parks system, including the past four years as south district superintendent.

Thirty years ago, Mount Mitchell was a sort of crucible for a handful of aspiring rangers who endured a bitter climate, paltry paychecks, thankless and demanding chores and practical jokes from old-timers.

Burns set about every



*BURNS' SON, ROBERT, PRESENTS A SKETCH OF HIS FATHER AS A RANGER.*

task without complaint, Ledford said, such as varnishing the restaurant's floors, shoveling snow and removing wildlife from the buildings.

In one of his letters to Raleigh parks leaders during the period, Burns said, "I believe North Carolina's greatest natural resources are its parks..." and added that core belief "lies not only in my mind but in my heart."

A native of Troy and a graduate of North Carolina State University, Burns was hired fulltime in 1977 as a ranger at Hanging Rock State Park. He returned to Mount Mitchell in 1979 and later served at Eno



*WAVES RETIREMENT CERTIFICATE.*

River State Park.

Burns was the first superintendent of Falls Lake State Recreation Area, serving there five years before being named superintendent at Lake Norman State Park.

As south district superintendent, he was responsible for operations, resource management, environmental education, law enforcement, safety and facility maintenance for 10 state parks from Morrow Mountain in Stanly County to Fort Fisher State Recreation Area on the coast.

At the retirement celebration, Burns said little except to thank his colleagues and his family.

Burns is well regarded for his analytical approach to solving problems, his patience and impeccable integrity, said Susan Tillotson, chief of operations and Burns' last supervisor.

"It has been my pleasure and my good fortune to work with you in the final chapter of your career," she told Burns. "And, it's been the good fortune of the division that you chose to spend your professional career in our midst."

# MARTHA WOODS LEAVES UMSTEAD

In midlife, Martha Woods abruptly changed directions. Her new path led to a career in state parks and an opportunity to put her signature mark on one of North Carolina's oldest and most storied state parks.

"I was no longer happy with a job that was just a job," Woods said. "I wanted a job that would mean something to myself and others."

In September, Woods retired from her new 19-year career, included the past 11 years as superintendent at Umstead State Park in Raleigh.

She told colleagues and relatives at a retirement luncheon at the park's Lipihio camp in October, "There's no better place to see the best side of people than North Carolina state parks. I'll miss working with dedicated and talented people every day. They do their jobs every day because they know that jobs in North Carolina state parks do make a difference."

Woods grew up in Orange County and graduated in 1974 from Radford University in Virginia with a degree in health and physical education. She had been working in the outdoors nearly 12 years for a phone company when she applied for a job as a ranger at Eno River State Park.

Then-superintendent Susan Tillotson took a chance on hiring her. She said Woods brought sound judgment and maturity to the job.

Tillotson, now chief of operations, said Woods dove into the tasks of organizing volunteers to improve a trail system at Eno River and co-writing the division's first Environmental Edu-



*SUSAN TILLOTSON, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, PRESENTS WOODS WITH A PLAQUE CONTAINING PHOTOGRAPHS OF ALL CURRENT STATE PARK SUPERINTENDENTS.*



*WOODS IS SERENADED WITH A SPECIAL SONG BY RANGERS KEITH NEALSON, CENTER, AND JOE SHIMEL.*

cation Learning Experience for school students.

In 1992, she moved to Pettigrew State Park and was promoted to superintendent at Goose Creek State Park in 1994. In 1996, she came to Umstead, just after the winds of Hurricane Fran had ravaged the park's woodlands and closed most facilities.

The park has also been buffeted by development at its borders and occasionally testy relations with its neighbors, including commercial enterprises, new neighborhoods and Raleigh-Durham International Airport. With more than 5,000 acres of woodlands set in a booming urban area, Umstead has always needed a superintendent with good diplomatic skills.

"I think you stepped up in ways that made this division proud," Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, told her. "Martha had a way of just 'handling things' that I think a lot of us wish we had."

Jean Spooner, chair of the Umstead Coalition and a member of Umstead's park advisory committee, added, "There were times when a lot of tough decisions had to be made. Martha has always been about the natural resource protection of the park and having good alternatives."

Woods' many retirement gifts included an award and a flag flown over the state capital from organizers of the Umstead 100, an annual marathon and one of many special events staged at the park.

Billy Totten, north district superintendent, called Woods a "phenomenal asset" to the park. "Martha's personality seemed to fit this park and this park to her. She has so much knowledge of the little things that make this park work."



# SCHNEIDER NEW SOUTH DISTRICT CHIEF

Greg Schneider, an 18-year veteran of the state parks system, has been promoted to south district superintendent for the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. He succeeds Jud Burns, who retired in September after a 30-year career.

As one of four district superintendents, Schneider will be responsible for operations, resource management, environmental education programming, law enforcement, safety and facility maintenance for 10 state parks from Morrow Mountain in Stanly County to Fort Fisher State Recreation Area on the southeast coast.

"Greg has broad experience as a park ranger and as superintendent at Jordan Lake and Fort Fisher state recreation areas and at Jones Lake State Park, three very different types

of park units in the south district," said Lewis Ledford, division director. "He is highly qualified for the range of challenges that a district superintendent encounters in a growing state parks system."

Schneider is a native of Florida who grew up in Iredell County. He graduated from Wingate College in 1995, earning a bachelor's degree in business administration.

He holds advanced law enforcement certification and in 1996, became the division's first certified law enforcement firearms instructor.

Schneider was a seasonal employee before being hired



as a park ranger at Jordan Lake in 1991. He moved to Eno River State Park in 1997. He became superintendent at Fort Fisher in 2000, at Jones Lake in 2002 and at Jordan Lake in 2004. He has received the division's Special Achievement Award and the Distinguished Service Award. He was named 1995 Ranger of the Year by the North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association.

Schneider said, "This region of the state parks system has some of the most unique, beautiful and inspiring natural resources and habitats found in this nation. I look forward to working closely with citizens, advocacy groups and staffs of the parks as we work to preserve and protect these examples of our state's natural heritage."

# LETCHWORTH WILL LEAD UMSTEAD

Scott Letchworth, a veteran ranger at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, has been promoted to superintendent of William B. Umstead State Park. He succeeds Martha Woods, who retired in September.

A superintendent is the chief of operations and administration at a state park or state recreation area with wide-ranging responsibilities for staffing, training, law enforcement, visitor services, natural resource protection and environmental education.

Letchworth grew up in Cary, was an eagle scout there and graduated from Apex Senior High School.

He was a seasonal employee at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area while earning a

bachelor's degree in recreation and park management from Appalachian State University in 1996. He also interned at Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky.

Letchworth worked at Hemlock Bluffs Nature Preserve in Cary before joining the state parks system as a ranger at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area in 1997. In 2001, he was promoted to a senior ranger position at Falls Lake, working at the Rollingview recreation site.

He is a certified environmental educator and a member of Ruritan National.



"Scott's roots in the fast-growing Triangle and his obvious dedication to protecting its natural resources make him an excellent choice to lead Umstead," said Lewis Ledford, division director. "It is an extremely busy park that sometimes faces conflicting demands, and he has the capability to address those issues."

Letchworth said that his first camping trip was at Umstead as a boy.

"Umstead is a park rich in cultural and natural history and an oasis in a sea of development in the heart of our state," he said. "I'm excited to be here and look forward to continuing the excellent work of the staff and superintendents that have come before me."



# NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS

## MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT

### OCTOBER, 2007

NC STATE PARK	October 2007	TOTAL Oct-07	October 2006	TOTAL Oct-06	% CHANGE (2007/2006) Oct YTD	
Carolina Beach	45,516	472,674	42,956	442,246	6%	7%
Cliffs of the Neuse	10,424	123,503	4,128	95,377	153%	29%
Crowders Mountain	38,094	347,486	38,985	314,246	-2%	11%
Eno River	27,433	299,147	24,041	271,069	14%	10%
Falls Lake	39,997	853,656	42,316	899,713	-5%	-5%
Fort Fisher	65,956	795,428	8,956	582,526	636%	37%
Fort Macon	94,766	1,108,774	75,378	1,111,208	26%	-0%
Goose Creek	14,158	149,168	11,946	132,975	19%	12%
Gorges	11,241	128,945	10,494	102,833	7%	25%
Hammocks Beach	10,191	107,226	7,941	67,530	28%	59%
Haw River	4,819	20,714	0	0	-100%	-100%
Hanging Rock	42,688	430,351	30,912	368,357	38%	17%
Jones Lake	3,859	65,283	3,436	61,723	12%	6%
Jordan Lake	39,636	1,132,995	51,702	924,274	-23%	23%
Jockey's Ridge	82,682	1,430,533	63,433	938,296	30%	52%
Kerr Lake	64,276	1,065,496	61,472	1,103,756	5%	-3%
Lake James	31,420	354,892	9,385	634,860	235%	-44%
Lake Norman	56,595	465,603	21,531	409,086	163%	14%
Lake Waccamaw	1,541	81,356	5,588	82,078	-72%	-1%
Lumber River	5,948	72,028	7,344	69,338	-19%	4%
Merchants Millpond	16,364	124,721	77,572	222,925	-79%	-44%
Medoc Mountain	7,136	51,359	5,648	49,172	26%	4%
Mount Jefferson	12,188	86,656	12,007	77,498	2%	12%
Mount Mitchell	57,556	301,030	64,210	276,404	-10%	9%
Morrow Mountain	35,820	357,300	34,660	312,382	3%	14%
New River	14,346	176,646	12,977	175,411	11%	1%
Occoneechee Mountain	6,433	54,390	4,396	48,239	46%	13%
Pettigrew	6,348	57,584	5,304	65,762	20%	-12%
Pilot Mountain	43,248	352,356	51,900	345,895	-17%	2%
Raven Rock	8,587	84,906	8,783	84,620	-2%	0%
Singletary Lake	3,085	29,006	2,545	32,791	21%	-12%
South Mountains	13,658	175,129	18,190	180,164	-25%	-3%
Stone Mountain	50,488	423,622	45,952	365,652	10%	16%
Weymouth Woods	4,031	41,698	3,468	37,889	16%	10%
William B. Umstead	54,321	537,582	51,446	521,964	6%	3%
<b>SYSTEMWIDE</b>	1,024,849	12,359,243	921,002	11,408,259	11%	8%



## ***Our Mission Remains...***

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;  
to provide and promote outdoor recreation  
opportunities throughout North Carolina;  
to exemplify and encourage good stewardship  
of North Carolina's natural resources for all  
citizens and visitors.

*8,000 copies of this public document were printed  
at a cost of \$630.00 or \$0.08 per copy.*

## ***SAFETY ZONE***

### **ENJOY FIREPLACE BUT KEEP FIRE IN PLACE**

✓Make sure your flue is clean and open and that the damper works. Remember to open the damper first.

✓Use a screen to keep sparks inside, and make sure that floor coverings and furniture are far enough away.

✓Make sure the fire is out before you leave it alone or go to bed.

✓Don't use gasoline to start a fire; use paper or kindling. And, dispose of ashes in a metal bucket or other metal container after making sure they've cooled.

*The Steward*  
NC Division of Parks and Recreation  
Public Information Office  
1615 MSC  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615

